

Executive Report
The DREAM Program Inc.
Board Meeting
May 14, 2005

As expected the last two and a half months have been a whirl wind of activity. Getting to know DREAM and fellow DREAMers has been a wonderful experience, and I can truly say I have never felt more welcome to a new position in my life. I would like to thank everyone for this amazing opportunity that I have been given and I look forward to working with everyone over the next few years.

There are a lot of exciting things to share with the Board in this report, but I would like to start with ALASKA! The DREAMers from Elm Street and their UVM mentors will be going to Alaska on June 20 for two weeks of hiking, rafting and other outdoor pursuits. This is the farthest that any DREAM group has gone to date and it is very exciting. There have been a number of challenges for the team to put this one together, but the plane tickets have been purchased and the UVM/Elm Street team continues to fund raise and should be well over their funding goals the day of their departure.

All of the Local Programs have had or are planning culminating experiences this semester. Most recently, Norwich and Green Acres went on a bus trip to Portland Maine to watch the Portland Seadogs, a minor league baseball team. Unfortunately, the game was rained out, but some forethought and on the road phone calls allowed the children and mentors to still have a great day in Portland. A trip to a children's museum and a walk along the docks replaced the game and everyone had a great time. Other trips that occurred over the past month include a Champlain/Birchwood trip to Montreal and a St. Michael's/Franklin Square camping trip to Camp Abenaki in North Hero. The two Dartmouth programs are planning trips for the end of the semester.

The Central Office staff has been very busy over the past two months. Not only has everyone had to keep up with their own various responsibilities, but we have been in the midst of a recruiting process. DREAM is working on filling four VISTA positions; two Program Liaisons, a Development Director, and a Camp Developer. We have met some amazing individuals and the final decision process will be challenging, but I think we will have a very strong team of new recruits to join our already strong team of DREAM staff. I hope to have a full report of who will be joining us for our next meeting in July.

Camp is starting to ramp up for the summer season. Dave has been working nonstop to put together an awesome team of paid staff and volunteer staff to work at Camp DREAM over the summer to provide 6 weeks of camping experiences to over 75 DREAM children. A number of the mentors will also be visiting Camp DREAM this summer to interact with their partners while that are at camp. It is going to be an incredible summer for everyone! On another note, we are also very excited to have Lu Neuse joining us as an AmeriCorp VISTA staff person as a Camp Team member. Lu has been an invaluable team member for the Camp team and everyone couldn't be happier that we are able to bring her on as the Camp Property Manager.

DREAM continues to take calculated risks as we work to provide an even better Summer Program for our communities in 2005. To that end we have purchased a 2002 15 passenger Dodge Van. This van will be utilized by the northern group of summer interns to provide activities and trips to the children of Green Acres, Birchwood, Elm Street and Franklin Square. Everyone is very excited about the possibilities that this van will offer to make this summer an amazing one for so many children.

DREAM is still investigating a new program site in Lamoille County. Recently we met with Ames Robb of the Lamoille Mentoring Partnership (LMP) and Jill Piacitelli of Johnson State College (JSC) to explore a partnership. We also toured a number of housing communities in Lamoille County including a small subsidized housing complex that is operated by the Lamoille Housing Partnership, a small housing complex operated by the Vermont State Housing Authority, and privately owned mobile home parks in Johnson. There still remains a large amount of legwork to make this new program happen, but we seem to have a great start with the LMP and JSC

Mike Foote has been very busy over the past few months with surveys and evaluations. Mike is working with an evaluation expert, Cindy Char, to establish a solid survey and evaluation program for DREAM. Several surveys have been sent to children, parents and mentors and the returns have been positive both in numbers and responses. We recognize that a strong system of evaluations and surveys will allow DREAM to continue to improve our programs and to seek larger funding possibilities from major foundations. I will keep everyone informed of this process as we move forward.

Finally, the Alumni Organization has made incredible progress over the past two months. In April the Alumni Organization voted in its first slate of officers; President Leah Threatte, Vice President Carly O'Connell, Treasurer Ed Bialas, and Secretary Elizabeth Rosen. This team, along with Paul Biggs, are working together to provide a solid footing for the future of the Organization. For one of their first tasks the Alumni Organization has chosen to award \$2,215 in grants to local programs for culminating trips and activities this year.

There is still so much to share, but I want to keep this relatively short. The staff will be heading out this week on a two day staff retreat. Our focus is on transition, roles and leadership and I hope to provide an overview of the retreat outcomes during our meeting on Saturday.